DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 393 521 JC 960 230

AUTHOR	Stanback-Stroud, Regina; And Others
TITLE	Toward a Common Course Numbering System.
INSTITUTION	California Community Colleges, Sacramento. Academic Senate.
PUB DATE	Nov 95
NOTE	23p.
PUB TYPE	Information Analyses (070) -- Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Academic Freedom; *Articulation (Education); College Credits; College Transfer Students; Community Colleges; Courses; *Educational Planning; *Intercollegiate Cooperation; School Policy; *State Norms; *Statewide Planning; Transfer Policy; Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS	*California Community Colleges

ABSTRACT

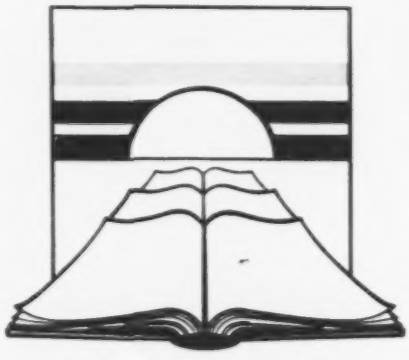
The Academic Senate of the California Community Colleges has undertaken an examination of the potential implications for articulation, curricula, and local college planning of moving to a common course numbering system (CCNS) in the colleges. Three possible methods for a CCNS include the following: (1) using the same number and prefix on courses containing core content and automatically articulating those courses as mutually satisfying requirements; (2) using varying numbers and prefixes, but coding them to indicate course characteristics (i.e., transferability, credit, level, etc.); and (3) identifying content is and allowing colleges to cross reference courses. Advantages of a CCNS include easy recognition of transferable units for students and facilitation of intersegmental articulation. However, this standardization may endanger the unique responsiveness that has been the hallmark of community colleges and may jeopardize academic freedom. While reviews of CCNS' in Texas, Florida, and Illinois have provided useful information on implementation strategies, a 1983 study of the potential for implementing a CCNS in California suggested that such a system would be excessively costly, bureaucratic, and probably unworkable. The development and application of a CCNS is possible if the state is willing to put forth resources for evaluative efforts and if local academic freedom is maintained. Assembly resolutions related to a CCNS are appended. (MAB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 393 521

Toward a Common Course Numbering System

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.



PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
j. Perry
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Academic Senate
for
California Community Colleges

Adopted November 1995

JC 960 230

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

COMMON COURSE NUMBERING SYSTEM
AD HOC COMMITTEE

1995-1996

Members

Regina Stanback-Stroud, Chair - Rancho Santiago College
Winston Butler, Los Angeles City College
Linda C. Collins - Los Medanos College
Lee Haggerty - Saddleback College

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction and Definition 1

Advantages 1

Disadvantages 2

History of Common Course Numbering in California 4

Related Activities 5
- ASSIST (5);
- Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (6)

Senate Bill 450 6

Information Gathering 7
- States: Texas (7)
  - Florida (8)
  - Illinois (11)
- ERIC (11)
- Associations / Organizations (11)

Articulation Issues 12

Conclusions and Recommendations 12

APPENDIX A 14

BIBLIOGRAPHY 15

SB450 16

This report examines the issues of articulation, curriculum, and local college implications surrounding the discussion of common course numbering in the California Community Colleges. The passage of SB450, the barriers to transfer, real and perceived, compels educators to explore the advantages and disadvantages of a common numbering system.

Various definitions are offered, along with a historical context of previous discussions on the matter. Information from other states which have successfully implemented such a system with approximately one-fourth the number of colleges and universities involved is examined.

The Board of Governors supported and charged the Chancellors Office staff with ensuring the passage of the student sponsored bill, over the concerns expressed by faculty and Chief Instructional Officers. Assurances were given to the legislature that a common numbering system could be developed using existing funds. To that end, the recommendations and conclusions included are based on the underlying assumption that the resources for the development of a common course numbering system will come from the Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges.

Toward A Common Course Numbering System
in
California Community Colleges

Introduction and Definition

The idea of Common Course Numbering has, for decades, been discussed, considered, examined, and abandoned by most colleges and universities throughout the nation. In an attempt to address " barriers to transfer" within the community colleges, the students' political organization identified the implementation of such a system a priority to be accomplished through legislative mandate.

It is appropriate, and even compelling for the California Community Colleges to look at the issue of transfer and address the many barriers. If the solution is to include common course numbering, clarification of the concept is necessary. There are at least three possible conceptual constructs of common course numbering:

a. A system which places the same number and prefix on courses containing a core content and automatically articulating those courses as mutually satisfying the colleges' degree and certificate requirements
b. A system which places varying numbers and prefixes, but which have numbers and prefixes keyed to indicate characteristics of the course such as whether it is transferable, credit, first level, etc.
c. A third numbering system which identifies equivalent core content and allows colleges to cross reference their courses

Advantages

A central argument in favor of common course numbering is the plight of students who desire to transfer between two different community colleges. Faced with a plethora of requirements and courses, the student attempting to transfer may experience frustration in deciding which courses meet which requirements, at which college. The use of common course numbers is seen as a solution of all transfer problems. If common course numbering facilitates intra-segmental transfer, it would no doubt provide welcome relief to students.

Similarly, common course numbering could positively impact intersegmental articulation in the future. Rationalizing the course numbering system, identifying courses that are similar and publishing these course lists all could lead to an ease of comparison across colleges and forward the acceptance of comparable statewide curriculum. Having a uniform course numbering system might facilitate the standardization of undergraduate requirements, at least in those core courses required of all transferring students. While not all would find this preferable or tolerable it would have the virtue of simplifying what is often made unnecessarily complex, the transfer of basic courses as a student moves from community college to community college and then to the California State University or the University of California. The resources put into forging and maintaining articulation agreements between dissimilar systems could be redirected toward other educational goals.

Currently, students who transfer to the University of California or California State University generally transfer as juniors once they meet general education requirements. Transferring in the student's major is more difficult. Separate articulation agreements between campuses make it difficult to outline or follow a clear path to ensure transfer and acceptance into a major from a community college. If all courses were numbered and articulated in the same way, the path of major transfer would be much easier for all concerned.

A numbering scheme for comparison of courses across all community colleges would necessarily involve developing a matrix of equivalent courses from one college to another, and from colleges to universities. Such a matrix could be an invaluable guide to the current maze of courses.

Underlying all those arguments is a perception that educators have made the simple need to have a portable education unnecessarily complex and burdensome. Faculty resistance to the idea of common course numbering has been interpreted, or dismissed, as self-serving, concerned more over turf than student success. Conflicting or even idiosyncratic course requirements, lack of articulation agreements between community colleges, and a seeming indifference to the frustrations of students attempting to transfer all have contributed to the growing belief that something must be done. Common course numbering has been forwarded as a simple, tax saving and rational means to reduce duplication and address student needs.

Disadvantages

If the goal is helping students, improving transfer rates, and saving taxpayers' money, one would have to raise the question as to whether a common course numbering system will, in fact, do these things.

A common course numbering system implies common courses. Curriculum at each of the 107 community colleges has evolved historically in interaction with the community being served, the educational philosophies of the particular faculty, and the curricular models embedded in and guiding the development of courses and programs over time. This has led to a diverse set of curricular offerings. Indeed the very structure of community colleges and their governance by locally elected boards with autonomous faculty has been a central defining tenant of the community college movement. Unlike regional or statewide systems, this structure has facilitated the expression of community needs in the programs and services of local colleges. The desire to standardize the path for transfer by enacting a common curriculum, often implied by advocates of the common course numbering approach, may endanger that unique responsiveness which has been a hallmark of the community college system. Any common course numbering system will need to take into account both the disadvantages and advantages of making this trade-off.

The professional judgement and talent of faculty are expressed in their curricular offerings. Moves toward standardization jeopardize the historic academic freedoms central to the California model of higher education. As such, these moves are likely to be resisted. While in the case of common course numbering, the impetus appears to stem from a genuine desire to serve students, one cannot assume that this is the only motivation or outcome. The imposition of a statewide curriculum upon diverse colleges is an educational agenda not well respected among many educators. The risks of politicization and bureaucratization inherent in such systems could undermine the hoped for benefits to students and taxpayers.

Currently curricular reform and innovation require the workings of internal bureaucratic processes at each college, along with articulation efforts with target transfer institutions. With any statewide common course numbering system, a mechanism for new course approval will necessarily involve new layers of review. The time for communication and deliberation, and other curriculum processes, will therefore lengthen. This is likely to dampen motivation for innovation and curriculum development. The pace of educational reform and retooling will likely be slower. This seems counter to the realities and pace of change particularly in scientific and technical fields

Indeed the tendency to identify support for common course numbering as support for ease of transfer may be a false juxtaposition. If done superficially, in fact, common course numbering could unduly complicate and even impede student transfer between the California Community Colleges and the California State University and the University of California segments. Matching courses may be convenient, but unless intersegmental articulation agreements are incorporated in the process, courses could carry the same number, but not transfer in the same way to four year institutions. This issue has arisen in several multi-college districts attempting to smooth intra-district transfer. If common course numbering is not done with articulation in mind, then students could be readily and easily misled.

Similarly, to have courses of the same number at different community colleges does not guarantee a student that taking these courses will lead to graduation or gain needed skills. The requirements for graduation, or for General Education Certification, vary from college to college. Again, this reflects the historic relation of courses to other courses within a given educational model or program. In fact, using a common course numbering approach implies that courses are equivalent units which can simply be interchanged or combined. But courses are part of a sequence, existing in relation to other courses in an overall model. Unless attention is paid to the relational aspects of courses in programs, students could be shortchanged or miss key components in skill development. The move toward common course numbering runs counter to efforts to create integrated general educational models, and enshrines a cafeteria style approach to general education.

By itself, common course numbering does not resolve the issue of differing requirements. It could form the basis for a uniform statewide approach to undergraduate requirements, but this would mean the retooling of the entire community college curriculum. Again, standardization could smooth the way for transfer, but at the expense of innovation, of local responsiveness, and of curricular diversity.

Common course numbering, however conceived, would require extensive curriculum development time in order to consider course content, the hours and/or units involved, as well as the level of study (freshmen or sophomore) Given the decentralized nature of colleges and disciplines, facilitation of such curriculum development will be a major undertaking. If we are to truly facilitate student success, then provision of adequate resources will be key in ensuring that the necessary educational discussions and decisions occur.

Furthermore, the correct implementation of common course numbering requires a commitment of resources for articulation and identification of core course content. This would require statewide coordination across disciplines, across community colleges, and across segments. Adequate funding has not been characteristic of previous attempts at common course numbering.

History of Common Course Numbering in California

Senate Bill 851 (1983) requested the California Postsecondary Education Commission to study the issue of Common Course Numbering. The bill, later enacted as Chapter 565 of the Education Code, was related to a concern about barriers to transfer primarily for students who were historically under represented in higher education. The specific study requirements as identified in Sections 9, 10, and 11 follow.

> *SEC. 9. The California Postsecondary Education Commission shall develop a plan for a course numbering system by public Postsecondary education institutions. If the Commission determines that the common course-numbering system is feasible, the Commission shall recommend a plan to implement the system. The Course-numbering system shall be designed to do all of the following:*
>
> *a. Promote the transfer of community college students to four-year Postsecondary institutions by simplifying the identification of transferable courses and the specific disciplines and programs to which those courses are transferable.*
>
> *b. Promote the development of a common method of course identification within each segment of public Postsecondary education where there is a clear need for such a common method.*
>
> *c. Help identify courses with comparable content, so that certain competencies can be expected upon completion of such courses.*
>
> *SEC. 10. The California Postsecondary Education shall study efforts to achieve a common course-numbering system in public Postsecondary education in other states, evaluate the various methods employed to achieve such a system, and estimate the cost of implementing each method in California.*
>
> *SEC. 11. The California Postsecondary Education Commission shall submit its findings and recommendations pursuant to /Sections 9 and 10 of this act to the Legislature on or before January 1, 1985.* [1]

The CPEC Study addressed the usefulness, feasibility, and cost of implementing a common course numbering system. After a review of the literature produced virtually no references or descriptors, the Commission made contact with various Higher Education Associations, including the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, and the American Council on Education. These contacts produced no information further than the confirmation of the State of Florida's activity in common course numbering. Consequently, CPEC contacted the chief state level executive in each state and asked for information about activities involving common course numbering and learned that almost half the states did nothing involving common course numbering and the other half had alternatives to common course numbering. "According to the Commission's survey of state-level executive officers for community colleges and other public two-year institutions, only Florida and Puerto Rico have common course-numbering

---

[1]California Post Secondary Commission. Common Course Numbering Systems: A Report to the Legislature in Response to Senate Bill 851. (December 10, 1984) p.1

system in place and none of the rest report plans for or interest in developing such a system."[2]

The California Articulation Numbering System was also examined in the CPEC study. Beginning as a pilot project which was formed and implemented on a voluntary basis, CAN was "designed as a cross-reference course identification for a common core of lower division, transferable, major preparation courses commonly taught on most college campuses. The system eliminates the need for every campus in the state to articulate their curriculum with every other campus in order to provide necessary information about major preparation to transfer. The CAN System facilitates transfer by establishing the academic integrity of a course, and then insuring its transfer to CAN participating institutions."[3]

The conclusions of the CPEC included a more systematic approach to numbering baccalaureate-level courses offered and the expansion of CAN. The conclusions also argued that course equivalency guides and matrices of equivalent courses would be of limited value in California because of the large number of programs and institutions involved in the transfer function in California. Finally, CPEC concluded the infeasibility of common course numbering in California by stating

> *"A uniform course-numbering system like that in place in Florida is unnecessary in California, excessively costly, and bureaucratic, and probably unworkable because of the size and complexity of California higher education, including the wide range of California Community College courses that receive baccalaureate-degree credit. Furthermore, such a uniform system appears to make unduly simplistic assumptions about the comparability or equivalency of courses offered by different institutions and gives Community College students and counselors a false sense of security about equivalency if they are not fully familiar with the special conditions and limitations imposed by some institutions on transfer courses with common numbers."*[4]

Related Activities

ASSIST

Varying activities in the Community College system, some extensive, others localized, exist in an attempt to address issues surrounding transfer and articulation. One such activity is Articulation System Stimulating Inter-institutional Student Transfer (ASSIST). ASSIST is a computerized system designed to provide Counseling faculty members, students, and others access to information in three areas:

a. Progress checks (not implemented)
b. Articulation agreements
c. Campus information

Participating in project ASSIST since its inception in 1985 are the University of

---

[2]Common Course Numbering, 5

[3]California Articulation Numbering System Status Report, (January 1, 1994) pp.1-2

[4]Common Course Numbering, 29

California, California State University, and the California Community Colleges. Over the ten year period of its existence, the Community Colleges have allocated over 1.5 million dollars to the ASSIST Coordination Site (ACS) and over 5 million dollars directly to community college campuses.[5] Dollars continued to be dedicated to ASSIST despite the fact that currently no more than 20-22 colleges participate and of those, only 2-3 are operational.[6]

Problems regarding the use of the funds, the lack of administrative support, data management, software development and cost, resource demands for maintenance, and varying technical difficulties lead to the submission of a proposal by the California Community Colleges to the ASSIST Coordination Council. Currently, most of the policy areas, some of the governance areas, and the expenditure budget have been agreed upon by the intersegmental representatives. The California Community Colleges have called for and expects to get, an evaluation of the ASSIST Project.

Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC)

Through the Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senates, faculty representatives of the three public institutions of Postsecondary education developed the IGETC. In an attempt to address issues surrounding transfer, the IGETC is a curriculum model by which students, unsure about the specific institution to which they are going to transfer, can complete general education requirements. Completion of IGETC, however, does not necessarily designate eligibility for admission to the University of California or the California State University.

Senate Bill 450

The California Student Association of Community Colleges sponsored a bill, with the support of the Board of Governors, for the Chancellor's Office to design and implement a common course numbering system. The board supported the bill without subjecting the issue to the consultation process designed to make sound academic decisions. The bill, amended several times, was placed on suspension on both the Assembly and Senate side due to the cost of development and implementation. Staff of the Chancellors Office were charged with facilitating the passage of the bill. To that end, amendments requiring the development, but removing the mandate for implementation ultimately helped the bill get to the floor of the Assembly.

In an attempt to address the issues surrounding the bill and the barriers to transfer, Vice Chancellors, Academic Senate representatives, and students met. The staff of the authoring legislator, Senator Hilda Solis, indicated they were only interested in accepting changes to the bill if the students approved of the changes. Various consultation groups indicated their "support of the concept" and remained silent on the student-sponsored bill and the political process by which this huge academic issue was being addressed. This tacit support by the administrative and professional groups, the explicit support by the Board and the Chancellor have led to the passage of what is commonly referred to as a "junk bill. "

The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges passed four resolutions during the 1994-95 year supporting the consideration of common course numbering as a possible way to

---

[5]Board of Governors Joint Subcommittee Report, Project Assist, (July 12, 1995) p 1

[6]Board of Governors Joint Subcommittee Report, p 2

address transfer issues. During the Fall 1994 Plenary Session a resolution calling for the faculty, students, and intersegmental groups to "*...develop ways, including aspects of course numbering to help transferring of community college students to 4-year colleges and universities*" was overwhelmingly passed.[7] During the Spring 1995 Plenary session, the body marginally passed a resolution to "*...support statewide efforts to support articulation and use of common course numbering.*"[8] Discussions during the breakout at the Plenary Session contained arguments both in support of and against common course numbering. Subsequently, a resolution "*...affirming the Senates commitment to essential elements of academic integrity, academic freedom, articulation, and resources while pursing common course numbing*" was unanimously passed.[9]

The Academic Senate has consistently been in support of addressing the barriers to transfer, considering common course numbering as an option, as long as the elements of academic integrity, academic freedom, articulation, and resources for articulation were included. The bill does not provide for any of these.

Information Gathering

The Academic Senate has taken three approaches to gathering information about common course numbering: (1) contacting and or visiting other state systems with common course numbering; (2) reviewing the literature of the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) system; and (3) contacting selected higher education associations.

States: Texas

In 1973 the Texas Association of College Registrars and Admissions Officers (TACRO) studied the feasibility of a common course numbering system. After requesting comments on the final report from each institutions president, the issue died for the next fourteen years. In 1987, a small project for implementing common course numbering in the gulf region was undertaken. The system was developed through a committee process and adopted by the nine community colleges in the region.

A fundamental precursor to the development of the system was the existence of *the Community College General Academic Course Guide Manual*. This manual identifies the core content of the lower division courses in the Texas system of higher education. To that end, issues of articulation, course content, and curriculum content had been addressed. This resulted in the perspective by the faculty that the "...development of a common course numbering system was an administrative issue with which they did not have the need to be overly involved" stated John Ray, Chair of the Common Course Numbering Board. Contact with the state Faculty Association Executive Director and President led me to the conclusion that there was little to no

---

[7]The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, Resolutions of the Spring 1994 Plenary Session, (April 1994) S94 4.2

[8]The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, Resolutions of the Spring 1995 Plenary Session, (April 1995) S95 4.1

[9]The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, Resolutions of the Spring 1995 Plenary Session, (April 1995) S95 4.11

faculty involvement in this academic issue.

After a system was identified and a matrix developed, colleges and universities began to adopt the system. With the exception of the University of Texas, all of the public and most of the private schools adopted the common number. Similar to the administration of CAN, colleges then must apply to the Common Course Numbering Board to use the numbers and pay a subscription fee.

Operations of the Board appeared to require resources of approximately $14,000 and several hundred hours of volunteer time. The background material appears to be silent on the issue of prerequisites. This could mean either of two possibilities: 1) colleges continue to have varying prerequisites but the course with the common number articulates despite that; or 2) processes to arrive at agreed upon prerequisites occurred.

Problems which seemed to arise during their development of the system included addressing complexities surrounding the two major ways American Government is taught, the multiple music courses, and the criminal justice courses. To address some of the issues and to develop the system in general, meetings with the representatives of the disciplines (department chairs?) occurred with members from the ad hoc committee having two to three disciplines assigned to them each.

Other problems included:

a. unresolved level problems (freshmen vs sophomore)
b. varying number of credits and course expectations
c. differing institutional philosophies and academic freedom
d. course inventory changes

Interestingly, the developers of the Texas Common Course Numbering System examined CAN. A December 5, 1991 letter from the Co-Chair of the Task Force on Common Course Numbering wrote "*I have reviewed the California Common Course Numbering System Materials and find parts of it very interesting. However, as far as our project is concerned, it is my opinion that it may be unwise to in. utionalize the project so rigidly at this phase of its development.*"

States: Florida

In the late sixties, registrars and advisors at Florida's public institutions of higher education voiced concerns about the difficulties encountered in assigning course credits to students transferring from lower-division colleges to the upper-division of universities, or to students changing institutions midstream.[10] At that time, institutional admissions officers based transfer credit decisions on course titles appearing on transcripts or on catalog course descriptions, rarely providing an indication of the depth and detail with which subject matter had been treated in the course.

In response to the concerns expressed by admissions personnel and a concern over unnecessary repetition of courses by transfer students, the Florida Legislature provided for the development of a Common Course Numbering System to facilitate the transfer of credit for

---

[10] Office of Postsecondary Education. Florida Statewide Common Numbering System. (September 1994) p1

equivalent courses among the state's colleges and universities(Section 229.551F.S.-Appendix E). In the 1971 Articulation Agreement(Section 240.115(b),F.S.-Appendix E), the Legislature established the procedures for the transfer of courses among institutions that participate in the common course designation and numbering system. The purpose is to have complete inventories of all postsecondary course offerings in the state. At this time, there are two private colleges participating in the common course designation and numbering system. Articulation occurs among all public postsecondary institutions in Florida.

The Statewide Course Numbering System (SCNS) was established at the universities and community colleges in the mid 1970's.[11] It is now used at all public institutions of higher education in Florida. (All postsecondary adult vocational education courses offered by Area Technical Education Centers, the 28 Community Colleges, the 9 State Universities, and 2 participating private postsecondary institutions, are included in the SCNS). The 10th public university, Florida Gulf Coast University, will begin operation August, 1997. The SCNS has been developed over the past two decades to accommodate a growing number of programs and courses.

Before SCNS could be implemented at the universities and community colleges, a number of decisions had to be made on procedures and structure. The first decision was to determine a classification system that could transcend the different organizational structures existing at institutions. Therefore, any classification system had to be "department-free". The system decided upon was a subject matter classification that would allow the categorization of courses According to the content only, regardless of the administrative units that courses were assigned at individual institutions.

By design, the course numbering system would:

1. Provide a framework for each subject matter area to categorize courses. The same framework would be used by all institutions.

2 Be a joint undertaking of universities and community colleges. A state agency would manage the system and facilitate communication.

3. Place responsibility of determining course equivalencies with faculty at universities and community colleges who would make decisions based on detailed course descriptions or course syllabi.

4. Establish course inventories listing all courses offered at Florida's universities and community colleges and identify equivalent courses.

5. Develop statewide course descriptions, or course equivalency profiles, to be used in determining equivalencies.[12]

---

[11] Florida Statewide Common Numbering System. p2

[12] Florida Statewide Common Numbering System. pp2-3

A second decision had to be made as to the structure of the classification system. Because all courses in the public institutions of higher education were to be included, subject matter had to be categorized to accommodate large numbers of different courses.[13]

The organizational scheme decided upon was a three-letter prefix and three-digit identification. This three-letter, three-digit number would be used only for categorization of content.(Levels, i.e., freshman, sophomore, and so on, would be assigned by each institution and become the first digit for a complete three-letter, four-digit course number).

The third decision to be made was who would develop the course categorization schemes (or taxonomies), analyze course descriptions, assign numbers to courses and determine course equivalencies.[14] Because only teaching faculty members have the necessary expertise (Section 229.551 F.S.), a committee for each subject matter, called the faculty discipline committee, was established consisting of faculty representatives from various institutions with one member serving as faculty discipline coordinator. This committee undertook initial development of taxonomies, analyzed courses, assigned prefixes and numbers, determined course equivalencies, and wrote statewide course descriptions, called course equivalency profiles.

The fourth decision was which criteria to use in assigning course numbers and determining course equivalencies.[15] Guidelines emerged which are still used by the committees and their coordinators. They include attention to prerequisites, intended students, level of complexity(introductory, intermediate, or advanced), content and depth and detail with which content is treated in a course, and outcomes(level of operation or specific skills). Instructional procedures or delivery methods are not considered when determining course equivalencies.

The Statewide Course Numbering System(SCNS) is coordinated by the SCNS unit, Office of Postsecondary Education Coordination(OPEC), Department of Education in Tallahassee. The professional staff consists of a director, a supervisor, two professional staff positions, and one support staff member. Each of the public universities, community colleges area technical education centers and the two participating private colleges have an SCNS designated contact person who coordinates course numbering matters.

Currently, there are 164 subject matter areas, each with its own faculty discipline committee with one member designated as faculty discipline coordinator.[16] For the universities, community colleges, area technical education centers and two private colleges, there are 100,000 plus courses on file. Approximately 19,000 requests for additions, deletions, reassignment of course to different numbers, or changes in titles, credit hours or levels are processed each year. Changes or reclassifications are either requested by institutions or decided upon by the faculty discipline committees.

---

[13] Florida Statewide Common Numbering System. p3

[14] Florida Statewide Common Numbering System. p4

[15] Florida Statewide Common Numbering System. p5

[16] Florida Statewide Common Numbering System. p6

State: Illinois

The state of Illinois has a Board of Higher Education but does not have a Common Course Numbering System. Their courses are based on course content and the numbers for identical courses may differ. To facilitate transfer for students among all Illinois colleges and universities, public and private, associate and baccalaureate degree granting, the Illinois Board of Higher Education, the Illinois Community College Board, and the Transfer Coordinators of Illinois Colleges and Universities jointly launched the Illinois Articulation Initiative in January 1993.

As the first step in facilitating student transfer statewide, panels of faculty members, assisted by Transfer Coordinators, were empowered to develop a General Education Core Curriculum that would be acceptable in transfer at all Illinois institutions, in lieu of each college or university's own campus-wide general education curriculum of comparable size. The General Education Core Curriculum consists of some 37 to 41 unit /hours of instruction that are accepted at all the institutions as transferrable and meetings are held every two years to develop and setup course equivalencies. An equivalency list is currently being developed and will be distributed to each institution to be used to advise students and be available for students to use independently.

The General Education Core Curriculum was developed by five 22-member Field Panels, with overall guidance and direction by a 23-member Steering Panel. In all, 123 faculty members and transfer coordinators representing the 12 public universities, 40 community colleges, and 14 private colleges and universities in Illinois participated in the development process.

The General Education Core Curriculum consist of courses in written and oral communication and in mathematics and of courses designed to introduce students to the breath of knowledge and the different modes of inquiry of different academic disciplines. The curriculum balances requirements among the core arts and sciences disciplines, with students selecting courses from the natural sciences, humanities and fine arts, and the social and behavioral sciences.

The Illinois General Education Core Curriculum, while not duplicating any single institution's requirements, closely mirrors the typical lower-division general education requirements of Illinois' baccalaureate degree-granting institutions. It also parallels the national profile of general education curricula prepared by the Association of American Colleges, and eliminates the current differences between the general education requirements for the Associate in Arts and the Associate in Science degrees awarded by the community colleges. These differences which have no parallel among Illinois' baccalaureate degree-granting institutions.

The Illinois General Education Core Curriculum will be implemented in stages over the next four years, with full statewide implementation scheduled for students entering in summer session 1998.

ERIC

The search of the literature revealed one resource regarding Common Course Numbering and few other resources regarding articulation and transfer.

Associations / Organizations

The American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC), American Association of Higher Education, American Council on Education were contacted for information. Referrals

from AACJC to the Department of Education in Tallahassee Florida were the only organizational response received.

Articulation Issues

Essential to the process of developing a common numbering system is the consideration of articulation issues. Because there exists no state standard for course content, courses in the various community colleges throughout the state have been created with varying prerequisite requirements, curriculum content, Carnegie hours and level of study. To that end, articulation processes would and should facilitate the identification of the common courses and the application of a common numbering system.

The application of a common numbering system combined with the failure to apply the appropriate articulation process can and will lead to greater confusion and greater barriers to intra-segmental transfer. Without the articulation processes, there is no guarantee that a particular college will accept another college's course even if they have the same number.

Conclusions and Recommendations

As long as colleges have the responsibility to confer their degrees and certificates and the faculty are responsible for validating the meeting of the educational requirements, the academic freedom to determine the educational standards of courses, programs, and educational models must be preserved. To that end, the processes for developing a common course numbering system should preserve the ability to develop and change curriculum for the maintenance of academic integrity.

The development and application of a common course numbering system are possible if the state is willing to put forth the resources for the appropriate articulation and curriculum examination. The Chancellor's office assured the legislature that the system could be developed using existing funds. To that end, the recommendations are made recognizing the Chancellor's Office willingness to fund the appropriate processes.

I. The Chancellor's Office should conduct an evaluation of the existing articulation efforts including ASSIST and CAN to determine if there are implications for expanding the efforts and processes to include the development and application of a common course numbering system. Consistent with a 1985 CPEC recommendation, we too recommend that the University of California's President Office, the California State University Chancellor's Office, and the Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges should study the feasibility of, and make recommendations to the Commission on Postsecondary Education about, adopting CAN numbers for all undergraduate courses offered generally across campuses in each of their segments.

II. In agreement with the 1985 CPEC recommendation, we believe a uniform course-numbering system is not feasible in California in light of the number of colleges, local governance responsibility, wide range of curriculum development processes, and the astronomical cost which would be required. Therefore, a Common Course Numbering System should serve as a third numbering system, not replace the institution's numbers and titles, and be cross referenced on a state-wide matrix.

Necessary changes to CAN processes and minimum components of the process used to design the common course numbering system should include:

A. Predominant Faculty Participation
   1. Discipline faculty forums
   2. Articulation faculty

B. Processes and resources for faculty to determine the core curriculum content, hours/units involved, and the level of study

C. Processes which allow and facilitate curriculum development and change in the context of the Common Course Numbering System

C. Processes which include the appropriate faculty role in decision making

D. Processes for addressing unresolved issues surrounding course content

E. Guidelines for structure and function of the Common Numbering System

F. Processes for maintenance and operation of the Common Course Numbering System.

G. Statewide training and dissemination of information.

H. Delineation of an operating budget and the funding source for the Common Course Numbering System

III. The common course numbering processes should incorporate the following assumptions:

A. The integrity of an institution as influenced by that institution's control over its curriculum will be respected and preserved throughout the examination, development and implementation of a common course numbering system.

B. The common course numbering system should not be highly bureaucratic.

C. The responsibility for determining course equivalencies should lie with the discipline faculty.

IV. California Community Colleges should consider the impact the selected process will have on existing articulation agreements with the University of California and the California State University.

APPENDIX A

Academic Senate Resolutions
on
Common Course Numbering

F94 4.1 Articulation and Transfer: Common Course Numbering
Therefore be it resolved that the Academic Senate for California community Colleges direct the Executive Committee to work with CalSACC and other appropriate groups in exploring ways, including addressing issues in course names and numbering, to help students progress through the California Community College system.

F94 4.2 Transfer to 4-Year Institution/Common Course Numbering
Therefore be it resolved that the Academic Senate for California community Colleges direct the Executive Committee to work with CalSACC and other appropriate groups, such as UC and CSU academic senates (ICAS), articulation officers, curriculum committees, and counseling faculty to develop ways, including aspects of course numbering to help transferring of community college students to 4-year colleges and universities

S95 4.1 Articulation and Common Course Numbering
Therefore be it resolved that the Academic Senate for California community Colleges support statewide efforts to support articulation and use of common course numbering.

S95 4.11 Common Course Numbering
Therefore be it resolved that the Academic Senate for California community Colleges affirm its commitment to essential elements of academic integrity, academic freedom, articulation, and resources while pursuing common course numbering.

F95 4.1.0 Common Course Numbering
Be it resolved that the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges adopt the position paper, "Towards a Common Course Numbering System."

F95 4.2.0 Common Course Numbering
Therefore be it resolved that the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges repeal Resolution F94 4.1; and
Be it further resolved that the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges repeal Resolution F94 4.2; and
Be it finally resolved that the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges repeal Resolution S95 4.1

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, Resolutions of the Spring 1994 Plenary Session. (April 1994) S94 4.2

The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, Resolutions of the Spring 1994 Plenary Session. (April 1994) S94 4.2

"Advisor," The American Association of Community College Trustees, XXIV Issue 4 (July/August 1994),p1

Board of Governors Joint Subcommittee Report, Project Assist, (July 12, 1995)

California Postsecondary Commission. Common Course Numbering Systems: A report to the 851. (December 10, 1984)

California Articulation Numbering System Status Report (January 1, 1994)

Illinois Articulation Initiative: General Education Core Curriculum, (September 1994)

Office of Postsecondary Education, Florida Statewide Common Numbering System, (September 1994) p1-5

Ray, John, "Gulf Coast Consortium Common Course Numbering Project", 1990

Texas Board of Higher Education, Texas Common Course Numbering System: System-Wide Course Matrix, 1994

C:\WORKING\FINALDOC\FALL95\CCN.F95

CHAPTERED 10-02-95 95-0493

Introduced by Senator Solis
(Coauthor: Assembly Member Cannella)
February 16, 1995

An act to add Section 71027 to the Education Code, relating to postsecondary education. mApproved by Governor October 1, 1995. Filed with Secretary of State October 2, 1995.

I am signing Senate Bill No. 450, but I am deleting Sections 3, 4 and 5.

This bill would require the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges to develop a general common course numbering system. It also would have appropriated $5 million from a bond if the authorization for the bond was enacted by January 1, 1996 and subsequently approved by the voters.

The provisions of the bill which would develop a common course numbering system are sensible. The $5 million appropriation, however, is inappropriate and also inoperable under its own terms. Capital outlay decisions are part of the annual budget, and should remain so. For these reasons I object to Sections 3, 4 and 5 and am striking them from the bill.

PETE WILSON, Governor

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 450, Solis. California Community Colleges: numbering system: bond proceeds: allocation for San Joaquin campus, University of California.

(1) Existing law provides for public postsecondary education in California which consists of the University of California, the California State University, and the California Community Colleges.

This bill would require the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges to develop, maintain, and disseminate a general common course numbering system for use by community college districts and would require the office of the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges to absorb the costs of developing, maintaining, and disseminating that system within the office's existing resources.

(2) The Public Education Facilities Bond Act of 1996, if enacted by the Legislature and approved by the state electorate, would provide for the issuance of state general obligation bonds in an amount not to exceed $3,000,000,000, exclusive of refunding bonds, issued pursuant to that act, and would provide that $975,000,000 of the bond proceeds authorized under that act be expended to assist in meeting the capital outlay financing needs of California's public higher education system.

This bill would provide for the allocation of $5,000,000 of the bond proceeds for the development of the San Joaquin campus of the University of California. The bill would provide for the reversion of those funds if unencumbered by January 1, 2000, to the 1996 Higher Education Capital Outlay Fund, for the use of the University of California system.

(3) Because the bill would impose additional responsibilities upon local community college districts, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program. The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local

DELETED MATERIAL IS IN BRACKETS []. ADDED MATERIAL IS CAPITALIZED.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement, including the creation of a State Mandates Claims Fund to pay the costs of mandates that do not exceed $1,000,000 statewide and other procedures for claims whose statewide costs exceed $1,000,000.

This bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to these statutory provisions.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. The Legislature hereby finds and declares, as follows:

(a) Many California community college students desire to, and do, attend more than one community college in the state during their educational career.

(b) Often community colleges, even those within the same district, have different numbering systems for the same courses of instruction. As a result, much confusion and many delays occur when students complete graduation requirements, transfer between community colleges, and matriculate to four-year colleges and universities.

(c) The inconsistencies described in subdivision (a) cost the students, colleges, and state a substantial amount of money, as unnecessary duplication of coursework is occurring.

(d) A first start to enhancing the quality, while limiting extra cost, of education is to ensure a common course numbering system within California's largest postsecondary education system, the California Community Colleges.

(e) It is the intent of the Legislature that the implementation of the common course numbering system pursuant to this section coincide with any regularly scheduled changes in administrative documents and other college publications in order to minimize the costs to community college districts of implementing the system and thereby reducing state-mandated local costs.

SEC. 2. Section 71027 is added to the Education Code, to read:

71027. (a) The Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges shall develop, maintain, and disseminate a general common course numbering system for use by the community college districts.

(b) The office of the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges shall absorb the costs of developing, maintaining, and disseminating a general common course numbering system pursuant to this section within the office's existing resources.

(c) The board of governors shall report to the Legislature by January 1, 1998, on its progress in implementing this common course numbering system.

SEC. 3. Of the funds derived from the issuance and sale of bonds and deposited in the 1996 Higher Education Capital Outlay Bond Fund, the amount of five million dollars ($5,000,000) is allocated for development of the San Joaquin campus of the University of California. SEC. 4. Sections 3 and 5 of this act shall become operative only if the Public Education Facilities Bond Act of 1996 is chaptered on or before January 1,

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

1996, and approved by the voters. SEC. 5. If the funds allocated pursuant to Section 3 are not encumbered by January 1, 2000, those funds shall revert to the 1996 Higher Education Capital Outlay Bond Fund for use by the University of California system. SEC. 6. Notwithstanding Section 17610 of the Government Code, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code. If the statewide cost of the claim for reimbursement does not exceed one million dollars ($1,000,000), reimbursement shall be made from the State Mandates Claims Fund.

Notwithstanding Section 17580 of the Government Code, unless otherwise specified, the provisions of this act shall become operative on the same date that the act takes effect pursuant to the California Constitution.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE